

THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cowper.*



HIRAM HARDHEAD'S TESTIMONY.

1776.

A TALE OF THE AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

CHAPTER IV.—THE PROPHET OF THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS.

SCARCELY was Delamere left alone, when the fiery mist of anger began to clear away from his brain. He sat down for a minute or two, and tried to persuade himself that he had only acted as became a gentleman under such provocation. But it would

not do; all the good and noble qualities of his old and trusty friend, all the loving-kindness that had been between them, came rushing back on his memory with a remorseful conviction that he had carried the quarrel too far.

Without any fixed intention, but vaguely hoping that Archdale might be yet in sight, he rose and walked out to the porch. The bright farewell of the Indian summer sun was gilding the distant heights and glowing on the quiet river; but there was no

receding figure on the path by that river side which led over the ford to the Plantation.

His daughter had not yet returned from gathering blue-berries in the Holyoke woods with her page, Philip. His men were all occupied on the high-lying stubble ground, winnowing the new wheat by favour of the soft west wind, for fanning machinery was not then known in New England. The maids were milking the cows in the meadow, and there was nobody about the house but himself and his trusty house-keeper, Hannah Armstrong, a plain, sensible-looking woman, who belonged to the Society of Friends, and had all the trustworthy qualities and soberness of mind and manner which so frequently characterise its members. She was well advanced in age, but her sturdy strength had not yet failed, nor was her dark hair tinged with grey, though she had seen strange and terrible things in her time—for Hannah had been the wife of a backwoodsman in Michigan; and as she sat there in her drab gown, white apron, and whiter cap, sewing, and singing in a low voice an old hymn at the best kitchen window, Delamere recollected the day of hard frontier fighting eighteen years before, in which he rescued her from the hands of an Indian chief, who had killed her husband and her three children, burned their cabin, and was carrying herself away captive to the western wilds.

Archdale was fighting by his side that day, and with the memory of it a strong impulse came over him to go at once to the Plantation and try to heal the breach that was made between him and his friend. It might have been done, for the first lapse in friendship is easily restored, and things might have gone differently with him and his; but what trifling neglect may tell on the mind and the life of man!

As Delamere turned from his long but unperceived look at Hannah, his eye was caught by a figure which few who saw it once would not recognise again.

Hard by the low hedge which fenced the lawn, on the side where a small stream wound its way to the river, was the stump of a large and ancient tree which had sent up shoots like young saplings, and with an arm round one of these, and a foot on the stump, while the other dangled in the air, stood a man whose body and limbs seemed at once so slender and so loosely hung, as to give him a reminding resemblance to a large spider. His head was beyond the common size, and, besides the remains of an old leather cap, was covered with matted and bristly hair of a dark sand colour; his face was equally large, and embellished by a straggling beard of the same hue, on which no razor had been exercised for some time; he had uncommon length of nose, eyes resembling those of a ferret, a wide mouth that appeared to be always speaking, and a complexion that defied both sun and wind to give it a deeper or more husky brown. His dress consisted of a red woollen shirt, a jacket made of the remnant of an Indian's buffalo robe, buckskin continuations that had seen hard service, leather leggings in the same estate, and rough shoes resembling the Indian moccasin.

The individual of this prepossessing appearance, had a name to match, for he was Hiram Hardhead, one of those eccentric characters that crop up in all times of public agitation, and echo in their own odd fashion the voices of their age and land. He styled himself the Prophet of the Green Mountain Boys, from an association corresponding to that of the Minute Men, but belonging to a lower stratum of society, and less advanced districts, for it consisted of

the young men inhabiting the clearings and shanties scattered along the sides of the Green Mountain, a range of high and then forest-clad hills on the western side of the Connecticut Valley, and some twenty-five miles from the Hoosac, or Holyoke chain, which forms its eastern boundary. The Green Mountains were Hiram's habitat, but he was seen and heard in all the adjacent country, as far as his antecedents were known. He had been a bee-hunter, a trapper, and a backwood-trader's man; but latterly Hiram discovered that his calling was to preach and prophesy, which he did without ceasing, but fortunately it was not on religion, but politics. If he had ever received any education, it was not a liberal one, yet Hiram was perfectly acquainted with the whole controversy between England and America, the character and policy of public men on both sides, and the views and motives of contending parties in his native province. He was known to be no coward, but the chief weapon of his warfare was that generally thought peculiar to the fair sex; for Hiram had a tongue of such power and volume, that once set on it left gainsayers no chance. He said he had got the inward light, or liberty, and could talk down any ten Tories, or Britishers either; moreover, Hiram was a far-out cousin of Hannah Armstrong. The good woman was by no means proud of the relationship. He had been born and brought up in the same sect, but was long ago cast out of its communion for his erratic ways, yet the prophet retained his early style of speech, which, together with backwood-phrases and words of his own coining, made a remarkable mixture.

Stumps of trees and top rails of fences were his favourite places, as well for prophesying as for rest. Whatever caprice made him choose that station at the Elms, it was evidently for the latter purpose Hiram had produced from his ample breast-pocket the pipe and match, flint and steel—a smoker's complete outfit in those days—when Delamere caught sight of him; and all the squire's recent indignation against liberty-men blazed up anew.

"What business have you in my grounds, you idle, seditious fellow?" he shouted. "Begone this moment! I wonder you are not ashamed to show your face after tearing up the warrant from his Majesty's Custom House."

"I have come to prophesy against thee, thou brother of Herod and Pilate—thou confuscated fag-end of British iniquity!" cried Hiram, in a far louder shout, swinging round on the stump, and levelling his pipe at him, as if it had been a pistol. "The stink of thy pride has gone up into the nostrils of the Massachusetts people, like the unsavoury scent of a seven-year-old polecat at high noon in mid-summer."

"For shame, Hiram Hardhead!" said Hannah Armstrong, looking out at her unboasted kinsman; "thou hast no right to speak so to friend Delamere on his own land. Go about thy business and learn better manners."

"I will also testify against thee, Hannah Armstrong, though thou art my cousin," responded Hiram; "yea, I will lift up my voice like a trumpet,"—he was certainly doing so by this time—"because thou dwellest in peace and pleasantness with that barking bloodhound of British tyranny. Thou guidest his house; thou holdest therein quilting and apple-bees; thou preparest for him buckwheat cakes and dough-nuts, bacon and beans, and such-

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like confections, and settest them before him in the midst of his high jinks and rampagious rigs agin the rights and liberties o' the great American people, when thou shouldest rather lift up thy testimony and heave the dishes at him."

Delamere had first thought of going in for his pistols; but when Hannah undertook the combat, he thought it better to let the woman and her cousin settle it; and, with that wise intention, he was turning into the house, when his eye fell on a stout cane in the corner of the porch. The temptation to chastise Hiram's insolence on the spot proved too great for the poor squire's wisdom, and, catching up the cane, he rushed out with, "You unmannerly fellow, I'll teach you how to talk to your betters." The blow he aimed at the prophet over the low hedge would have been something to remember, but Delamere had not calculated on probabilities. By a dexterous stoop and a backward swing Hiram avoided his cane, and the squire, having over-reached himself in the attempt, lost his balance and came down, partly on the hedge and partly on the ground.

"Behold, thou art brought to the dust with a mighty down-come and a thunderin' kerwollup," cried Hiram, performing a sort of war-dance with one foot on the stump and the other in the air, but still keeping judiciously out of reach, "in the midst of thy high-flyin' randyness and tryin' to leather the righteous, wherefore thou art an emblem of the varsal overthrow and upturnin' of all Toryism in this land. Also from thee I will take up my parable concernin' that man George, in the rotten old country; his name is Whelps, and truly a cross-grained, ill-conditioned, pig-headed whelp he is."

Here the prophet was interrupted by a shout of, "By the powers, I'll give you a parable for onsultin' the squire, yer world's wondher!" and Denis Dargan, flourishing a flail, his favourite weapon, bore down upon him at the other side of the hedge. Hiram was not disposed to await the onset of the strong and active young man from the Emerald Isle; he took a spring to clear the stream, but fell headlong into it. Dargan's flail made the water splash yards high the next moment, and his loudly-expressed intention to break every bone in the prophet's skin, was escaped only in some degree by the latter scrambling out of the stream and flying at top speed towards the Holyoke woods, dripping like a drifting rain-cloud, and hotly pursued by his furious assailant.

It was proverbial that nobody could overtake Hiram Hardhead, the man was so perfectly constructed for running. Denis kept him in sight for some time, and cheered on the chase with, "Whoo there, the Balmacarrots boys, only let me get hold o' ye!" But on the high-wooded ground the prophet disappeared from his vision, and was finally lost among the thick-growing trees. "Nothing living could catch that creather; but bad luck to the matter it is, for he's his own any way," said Denis, after a long look round him. "Howsomever, he won't come back in a hurry. I got two or three wallops at him wid the flail."

"Vat you be a seenen arter, mine friend?" said a man's voice from the slope above; and Dargan saw, standing in the shadow of an old tree, a figure so short, stout, and sturdy, that it might have passed in uncertain light for one of his own logs set up to dry, for it was no other than Vanderslock, the Dutch lumber-man, whose life was passed, like others of his

trade, in the mountain forest solitudes, hewing down trees, stripping off their branches, and sending their trunks down the nearest stream that had communication with the seaward river on which stood a port or town, where they might be sawn into planks, or otherwise prepared for the use of the carpenter and builder. Vanderslock's trunk-hose and leather doublet would have been a study for a painter given to Dutch groups; so would his face, which was round and full as one of his native cheeses, and never wanting the ornament of a short pipe, for some people said he slept smoking; but it was not wanting either in an expression of mingled honesty and shrewdness, which made him true in trust and safe in action.

"I'm looking for that strange baist, Hiram Hardhead," said Denis, who in common with all the country round, was well acquainted with the lumber-man; "he's been playin' his pranks on the squire, screechin' abuse over his hedge, till I could hear it every word; and it would be ill my comin' to stand still and hear the like."

"So would it, mine friend; you are the squire's pest man, set in great bower and drust;" and Vanderslock came down and stood confidentially by his side.

"More nor that," said Denis, "he tuck me into his sarvice three years ago, when I was an orphan boy, saved by a marcirful despinsary out of a shipwreck in Boston Bay, where my parents and two brothers was lost. And a good masther he has been to me iver since."

"He is von very big Dory," said the lumber-man.

"An' the more's the pity; I'm for liberty myself. Maybe, if it begins here, it will get the length of poor Ireland at last."

But Dargan's patriotic aspirations were cut short by the Dutchman saying in a hasty whisper, "Mine friend, did you see a man on a horse's back 'noid holsters, and a valise on him, hereabouts?"

"Not a bit of him I saw. Are ye afearred to be tuck unawares? Is it a private still ye keep up there?" said Denis, in a tone as low.

"No, no, mine friend, dere is noting to still; only somebody tell me dere was a man of dat sort galloping about de woods. I only come down to look for mine frau's squirrel. Oh, mine friend," and the Dutchman sent a puff of smoke into Dargan's face with the force of the sigh he drew, "dere is no peace mid de fraus, if you don't give dem all der own vills and vays; dat vill be made clear to your understandment ven you get into vedenlock, vich indeed has much drians for de batience and vortitude of man."

"No doubt of it. Father O'Reily, over in Balmacarrots, used to say the women were the 'Ould Boy himself,' but we couldn't do widout him, which showed great undherstanding in him, seeing he was a priest, and had nobody but his niece about him, in course. Howsomever, I must go home. Good evenin', Mither Vanderslock; I hope ye'll soon catch yer lady's squirrel," and Denis turned away, singing—

"A fair maid once I courted,
And, oh, but she was thrue."

But at some distance he looked back, where the puffs of the Dutchman's pipe could yet be seen, and added, "Well done, old broad breeches, ye have something afoot ye don't want me to know; but I'll make it out wid continwal watchin'."

THE ISLAND OF JOHANNA.

THE Island of Hinzuani, or Johanna, little known to Europeans, but well remembered by those who have anchored in the blue waters beneath the deep shadow of its hills, has of late commanded attention in connection with the movement for the suppression of the East African slave trade; and often within the last few years have we heard the name of this distant, sunny island, the inhabitants being mentioned at intervals by Dr. Livingstone, by Mr. Stanley, and other recent travellers. We read of the "simple Johanna men" as having archly deceived travellers in childlike fashion. Again, we hear of the Arabs of Johanna as "a most interesting set, most favourably disposed to the English." The following notes are from one who was for nearly two years resident in the island.

Johanna is one of the Comoro Islands, in the Mozambique Channel, and is about the size of the Island of Madeira. The climate is considered more salubrious than that of the surrounding islands and coasts, inasmuch that in those burning regions it is regarded as a kind of sanatorium; and with good reason, for on the hills the air is very refreshing in comparison with that of Zanzibar, Mozambique, and other places near. Nevertheless, in Johanna we do not escape the terrible intermittent fevers belonging to those parts, nor is the island free from the torment of mosquitos, from rainy seasons, storms of wind, and other accompaniments of a tropical climate.

Johanna is much visited by European ships for provisions, the water being particularly good, and the small-horned bullocks of the island much in request, besides poultry, rice, sweet potatoes, etc. The Johannese find keen enjoyment in trading with the ship's crew, as is plainly shown by the eagerness with which they hasten to prepare their canoes and collect their merchandise the moment they descry, by help of telescopes, a ship like a speck on the horizon; and, be it observed, they are especially happy if they are able to call out, "The English flag!" As soon as the vessel has cast anchor, the canoes are seen paddling towards it, and the deck is quickly crowded with Arabs eager to trade with the new-comers, whom they tempt with golden-coloured and red bananas, unripe oranges of a rich dark green, clusters of pineapples, tamarinds in brown husks, huge cocoanuts in their green enclosures, and many articles of food; also bright-coloured fans, rough straw hats, and antique-looking rings, earrings and bracelets, all of silver, for which they take in exchange such things as Manchester prints, apparel of all kinds, needles, nails, looking-glasses, pistols, knives, etc. Few anchorages can be more strikingly picturesque than that of Johanna Bay, where a semicircle of the richest mountain scenery is reflected in a sea of sapphire blue. A few yards from this harbour stands a large white house, built of coral lime, approached by two broad flights of steps, on either side of which pomegranate trees are planted. Before the windows is a noble mango-tree. This house was formerly the English consulate, but is no longer required for that purpose. Within sight of ships at anchor in Johanna Bay is a small mosque, and close to it an archway leading

into the little city of Matsamudo, the capital of the island.

Between the amphitheatre of mountains and the sea-shore is one sacred piece of ground, held in reverence by the gentle and kind-hearted Arabs of Johanna—namely, the "strangers' cemetery," where Protestants and Roman Catholics repose together. On each resting-place is a mound of grey boulders, overshadowed and encircled by a hedge or colossal wreath of foliage, the verdure of which never fails. It is said that this ground was long ago consecrated by a Christian bishop, whose travels led him to pass by that way.

The population of Johanna, which has been estimated at 12,000, consists of Africans and Arabs, besides many Malays and Malagash, who constantly reside on the island. The Africans are in subjection to the Arabs, who have governed Johanna for more than two hundred years by means of a Sultan, whose power is checked by an aristocracy.

The following is the generally received tradition among the Johanna Arabs concerning the way in which their island was peopled. We tell it as narrated by Mahomet Aloui, one of the Johanna "nobles," who, when questioned on the subject some years ago, replied to this effect:—

"They say a Portuguese gentleman landed here with some slaves, and finding the island both lovely and fertile, set sail again to bring back with him some of his kindred and his best friends, leaving his slaves to do a certain quantity of work during his absence. On his return the slaves were not to be found; they had fled into the 'bush,' and it was impossible to collect them together again, for they hid from him and rebelled against his orders. He left in despair, the slaves remaining; and this was the beginning of the 'bushmen,' who are still a free people. The Arabs of Johanna arose thus:—An Arab gentleman visited this island accompanied by his wives. When he saw what a beautiful country it was to look upon, he said he would never leave it. He made friends with the bushmen gradually by showing them great kindness and sending them presents. Many of them left the bush and became slaves to him. He had a numerous family, and, moreover, sent messengers to fetch his relations and friends. Thus, besides the bushmen, the island was now peopled with Arabs and slaves. This Arab gentleman was our first Sultan, we believe; but we do not know his name."

The same Arab gave the following account of the way in which Sultan Selim, father of the present sultan (Abdallah) came into possession of the throne:—

"Sultan Aloui was quietly reigning over us, and we were contented; but his brother, Prince Selim, rose up against him and fought for the throne. He conquered, and Sultan Aloui was driven from the island. He sought redress from the English at Bombay, where he was treated with royal honours by the English Government. He was accompanied by his son, Mahomet Abdallah, by Saidi Dremen, the present grand vizier, and many others who espoused his cause. From Bombay he was referred

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to the English authorities at Mauritius, and thither he went, as his son tells me, full of hope; but shortly after his arrival he died, and he lies buried at Mauritius. His adherents then returned to Johanna, and easily obtained a free pardon from Sultan Selim, whom they served loyally ever afterwards."

The Johannese are strict Mohammedans, priding themselves on implicit obedience to the laws of their religion. "In large countries," say they, "where the people grow rich and great, the good laws of Mahomet are often broken. In Constantinople, for instance, they drink wine, whereas we, in this small island, never forget the good laws of our prophet." It is true that no wine is taken; but the Johannese are always, except during the Ramadan fast of one month, under the influence of their favourite narcotic, betel-nut, without which, as they say, they "half-die." Five times a day the voice of the Muezzin is heard, calling "the faithful" to their prayers. The Muezzin is generally a blind man, chosen on account of his misfortune, because he is unable even from the heights of the minaret to see into the harems. These blind officials call out in a loud voice from all the minarets of the mosques, chanting such words as these: "God is great; I attest that there is no other God but God. I attest that Mohammed is the prophet of God. Come to prayers; come to the temple of salvation. God is great. There is no God but God." Instantly all conversation ceases, and visits are abruptly brought to an end by the simple speech, "I go to pray."

Then the Arabs are to be seen arranged, with their faces towards Mecca, in double rows, on the narrow terraces of the mosques. First they stand erect; then they kneel down, bowing their heads till they touch with the forehead the stones on which they kneel. Having repeated the allotted number of prayers, they spring down from the terrace, and immediately enter into most animated conversation. All the gossip of the town goes on after the evening devotions. At last they walk off in groups, and gradually disperse, disappearing through the blackened, ancient-looking archway which leads into the town.

The Johannese observe the Ramadan most rigidly, but are wont to complain towards evening that they "half-die with hunger and thirst," and they sigh piteously for betel-nut, watching impatiently for sunset, when they hasten home after their evening devotions at the mosque, and, as they declare, "feast all night," to strengthen themselves for the re-commencement of the fast at sunrise.

Matsamudo, the capital, is said to contain about 3000 residents. There are nine mosques in Matsamudo, one of which, just outside the city gate, is much favoured on account of the stream running at the foot of its terrace, in the waters of which the "faithful" can perform the ablutions commanded by their prophet before they approach the mosque. This mosque near the stream is very small, but is lofty in comparison with its size. The walls are spotlessly white, and the whole of the interior is so clean as to suggest the idea that it has never been entered. There are small cocoanut mats spread about the chuman floor, and several diminutive windows near the roof admitting a subdued light. Up the centre are four massive white stone pillars, standing separately at equal distances, and terminating at a considerable distance from the roof: the whole building is of an Eastern style of architecture, but severely

simple. The roof is pointed and constructed of beams of cocoanut wood. There are two doors, one at each end, and outside each are two massive stone baths filled with water. The town consists of several very narrow streets, darkened by high white houses, built of coral lime, the doors being made of some dark wood, sometimes carved and inlaid with bright colours. The windows are exceedingly small, and placed near the flat roof, so as to prevent the possibility of the ladies looking out, or the passers-by looking in. The streets are usually so silent as to give the impression of a sleeping city. There are no horses in the island, so there can be no noise of traffic. One meets occasionally stately-looking pedestrians, turbaned and robed in white, with scarves of rich colours, leisurely threading the streets of the shady little city; then, perhaps, we come upon a group of Arab gentlemen, playing at their favourite game of chess in the open air. From time to time one may hear from one of the house-tops a slave being summoned home; some such words as these being called out, on one high note, in a loud voice, which sounds far and wide through the clear air: "Musa! Musa! haste, haste, Musa! the master calls! Come! Haste! Musa! Musa!"

Then, again, may be observed an Arab breaking the silence by knocking repeatedly at one of the carved wooden doors, calling out and making much noise that all ladies may disappear before he is admitted. We have been told of an Arab lady who "cried plenty all day," because she was seen by one of her husband's friends as she ran across the reception-room.

The Johannese ladies are imprisoned all day; closely veiled and well attended by those appointed to guard them from the eyes of the curious. As we once heard it said, in broken English, by Prince Dremen, a cousin of the present Sultan: "Suppose one Arab man say to another Arab man, 'How does your wife go on?' That very bad; he plenty angry." These captive ladies steal out on bright moonlight nights, being piloted through the streets of the town by a company of slave girls and men, who hold a canopy over them, and call out as they walk, "Make way! A lady comes!" Any Arab gentleman who may be passing by, on hearing the above alarming announcement, immediately turns his face to the wall and waits, most honourably shutting his eyes until the veiled lady is out of sight. The women never appear at the mosques, but are supposed to pray at home. They are perfectly contented, and are dressed up like dolls. They are scarcely allowed to learn to read and write; for, as we once heard an Arab gentleman say, "If they could write letters, they might make friends without our knowledge, and if they could read they would grow plenty wise." But there are exceptions; two or three of the Johanna ladies can both read and write. One of these, named Fatima, was remarkable for her amiability of disposition: none of the dreaded dangers accrued from her power of writing; and although through her reading she may have "grown plenty wise," her husband, Prince Mahomet Abdallah, asserted that she was "the meekest woman in the island," adding, "I shall always pray my best friends to marry a woman who can read and write."

Shops are unknown in Johanna; but occasionally, after the arrival of a ship from Europe, Bombay, or Aden, it is rumoured throughout the town that one

of the princes, the grand vizier, or some such dignitary, "has a store at his house;" upon which all who have any money to spare crowd around the doors, where they find various bargains being made. The Arabs of Johanna, from the high-born chief who washes linen, to the slave who only paddles his small canoe, are all eager to barter, and, as they say, "make wise bargains." The Sultan has his "palace" at Matsamudo. Formerly the Sultan preferred dwelling at an older town, named Domoni. He has also small country residences, or "gardens," as they are called.

The Johanna men, so often mentioned as being hired to act as guides to travellers, must generally be chosen from among the bushmen, or sometimes the slaves.

We cannot think that slavery will much longer exist among the Johannese; for if once convinced of the wrong thus done to their fellow-creatures, it seems just possible they might relinquish this relic of barbarism. We read the other day of a church to be erected at Zanzibar on the spot where formerly there was a slave market. May we not hope such changes are in store for Johanna? Who can tell? In the memoir of Bishop Mackenzie, by Dean Goodwin (p. 303), we find Mr. Waller thus speaking of the Johanna people: "One of the young princes has become a staunch Christian, and report says the Sultan himself is mainly anxious to know English thoroughly that he may read the Bible. He says it is 'more better' than the 'other book,' meaning the Koran. Still, reading it for its poetry and searching it for its faith are two different things. Yet, with a people so eminently susceptible of the power of language, and really religiously inclined, I cannot help thinking very much might be done. I mentioned the subject of a missionary to several of them. Nothing could delight them more than to have some one who would teach them English; and the King promises a piece of land and his personal aid to any one who would come out for this purpose; but, as a good Mohammedan, he cannot ask point-blank for a missionary."

We will supplement this quotation by stating that, to our knowledge, the Sultan thus alluded to always showed himself most anxious to learn English, never refusing to "take a lesson and ask wisdom," as he expressed it. Often he would pay morning visits to European friends who were willing to instruct him in reading and writing English. As he entered the room he would say, "Teach me for one half-hour now, out of good English book," adding, as he drew from the crimson scarf around his waist the fibre of a cocoanut-leaf, "I give you Johanna pen; what for not teach me to write this morning?"

Johanna cannot boast of anything worthy the name of an army. If any were cruel enough to attack this defenceless island and its well-disposed inhabitants, some attempt might be made to defend their coral shores; but we heard it said by many of the Arabs there, that "one English man-of-war could smash the whole island in quick time."

As for navigation among them, although they have no regular sailors, there is always a captain at hand to manage their dhows, and a rough crew to unfurl the large sail, ply the oars, and hoist the Johanna flag of crimson bordered with white. How the laws are carried into effect does not appear; we certainly heard laws spoken of, and one solitary official mentioned, called the "Judge of Johanna,"

but the nature of his office seemed to be somewhat of a mystery to the Johannese themselves.

It is difficult to convey an adequate idea of the exceeding simplicity of these people and the primitive character of their arrangements. Free from the conventionalities of civilisation, their lives glide on easily from day to day, apparently unburdened with care; and the sorrow of poverty is unknown to them, surrounded as they are by the riches of Nature.

We cannot bid farewell to Johanna without telling of the hospitality and exceeding kindness shown to strangers by the Arabs of that lovely island. Surely, all who have for any length of time resided among these people cannot fail to remember them with grateful affection.

M. G. M.

THE HOME ASPECT OF MR. TENNYSON'S POEMS.

BY THE REV. S. J. STONE, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE KNIGHT OF INTERCESSION," ETC.

THAT there is a general appreciation of Mr. Tennyson's poetry throughout the English-speaking part of the world is a fact which, we suppose, no one really acquainted with the tone and temper of this generation—whatever his own likings or dislikings may be—will now deny.

This general appreciation may be authentic, or it may be conventional—that is to say, it may come of honest personal conviction, or of a following of the fashion, but in either case it is a real sentiment.

For if it is of honest personal conviction, there can be, of course, no doubt that this poet is a prophet in his day; and if it is to a great degree conventional, nevertheless, this very convention proves a condition of the public mind which must have a very close relation to real acceptance and devotion, worthy or unworthy, of the works, and to the person of him who is officially crowned with the bay in this country. For the public mind invariably, if it follows at all, follows in the wake of some *real* conviction, whether that conviction be a worthy one or no.

We are sure that the conviction in this case is a worthy one: but we are quite sure also that its general acceptance and prevalence is not as intelligent as it might be.

For example, we apprehend that out of a dozen persons not only willing to allow, but really convinced, that Tennyson is great and useful as an intellectual and moral power in this generation, more than half would be disposed to qualify their appreciation by an opinion, however expressed, that his poetry was of an esoteric sort, which had little concern with, and little immediate power over, the ordinary public mind in relation to home scenes, and home affections, and home truths.

"In Memoriam," the "Princess," "Maud," and the "Idylls of the King," would be especially in the thought of this majority giving its judgment to this effect.

But we are inclined to believe that the poet would never have reached the royal position which he holds merely from the esoteric power of these poems—though we fully admit and intensely appreciate all that they have been, and are, and will be of pleasure and profit to the more cultivated—for we are sure that there is a large part of his writings not to be so narrowly characterised, which has contributed greatly to the result of this general appreciation.

Poems like the "Grandmother," Millais' illustration of which forms our frontispiece for this month, have exercised, and still possess, an extraordinary influence over the public mind: and the home aspect of the Laureate's poetry is one of more width and importance than most persons, who think that they give him his due in all regard and honour, are, or seem to be, aware of, if we may judge by their general tone of expression.

Our opinion to this effect may be illustrated as well from his earlier as from his later poems. We will give some instances, in the first place, from the volume which first secured to him his reputation and position among the poets.

One of the earliest of these pieces is a short poem, little more than half the length of a sonnet: and it is at once so simple and so full, that any mind of ordinary intelligence, after having read it over three or four times, in not many minutes, might find pleasant food for hours of reflection, to a result possibly much more interesting and useful than the reading throughout an afternoon of any one of the many novels which profess to illustrate ordinary domestic history. The wonder is that none of the writers of such tales, so far as we know, have made use of it as, so to speak, the "skeleton of their sermon," and so clothed and expanded it, that the nine lines have become at least three volumes. It is called "Circumstance," and it is short enough for quotation in full:—

"Two children in two neighbouring villages
Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas;
Two strangers meeting at a festival;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall;
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease;
Two graves grass-green beside a grey church tower,
Wash'd with still rains and daisy blossomed;
Two children in one hamlet born and bred:
So runs the round of life from hour to hour."

Not far off is the "Miller's Daughter;" and here again we have a poem, lying like a cut diamond, to be clearly seen and appreciated by every eye that will look, among a number of other gems whose intrinsic beauty and value can only be thoroughly understood by the initiated.

It is one of the many proofs that, however difficult to the general reader Mr. Tennyson's poems may be as a rule, demanding so often a cultivated and refined intelligence to secure for them a thoroughly intelligent acceptance, yet the "*odi profanum vulgus*" of the Roman poet is no motto of the Englishman.

How many hearts that know thankfully the happiness of home, as we think we Anglo-Saxons understand it best, have been touched and stirred by this poem and its final verses!

"Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms entwine;
My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with thine.
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes for ever dwell:
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

May that God bless thee, dear—who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find."

"Lady Clara Vere de Vere" is a poem which,

although of another sort in one aspect, has its important bearing on certain home truths, and, without doubt, has had no little influence for good: though we are inclined to doubt whether every admirer of the following verses is aware that the reference of the third line is to Adam and Eve:—

"Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above us bent
The grand old gardener and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good;
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.
Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands?
Oh! teach the orphan boy to read,
Or teach the orphan girl to sew,
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go."

The poem which follows this, "The May Queen," is one which has, perhaps, given as much simple pleasure, and been easily productive of as much good of the best kind, as anything that has been written anywhere in this century. The pretty village maiden, the devoted mother, the little pet-sister, the rustic lover, the delicious anticipations of next day's festival in a mind bright and pure, but so ignorant of the true realities of life and death, selfishly eager for enjoyment, and so exacting in its sweet, unconscious tyranny over mother and lover—all this is admirably portrayed in the first part. A poet less true to nature would have made the story in two parts only, and the last of these three would have been the second. But in real life, young men and maidens, because they happen to become consumptive, do not leap at once from their former condition of pure worldliness into one of unselfish devotion, and of a faith which, with a quiet joy, can look not at the things that are seen, but at the eternal things not seen. That kind of thing is to be found in books where actual truth is sacrificed to a vivid contrast, and where the tone is one rather of sentimentality than of genuine sentiment. And between sentimentality and genuine sentiment exceeding great is the difference, exceeding wide is the gulf. Thank God! the great change, the vivid contrast, the new knowledge of the new eternal life, is a reality in many and many a case of those who before illness have been unconverted; but in nine cases out of ten, this new condition of blessedness and good hope has had just such an interval as is represented by the half-resigned, half-discontented state of mind, partly pensive, partly dreary contemplation of death, portrayed to us by the poet in the second part. We have not space to enter into all the power and the beauty of the teaching of the conclusion, and it must suffice for us to quote the words put into her mouth in description of the ministrations of the parish clergyman:—

"He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in:
Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if that could be,
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me."

We have chosen this poem of the "May Queen"

for special comment, because in this point of reality and truth to nature it is so well matched with that poem, the "Grandmother," to which our frontispiece belongs. How real it is from beginning to end! In the mind of the old woman of ninety, past and present mingle in pathetic confusion, and yet the old vigour still asserts itself, the old faults are indicated in occasional tone and expression, and the old nobleness and integrity are shown with the sunset glow upon them of the "Grace which is to be had," and of the Peace which is "the message of the Book."

It must suffice for the present to instance, in conclusion of this article, several of the poems in the various volumes of the Laureate which illustrate the title under which we have written. They are the following—and the selection does not pretend to be anything like an exhaustive one:—"The Gardener's Daughter," "Dora," "The Two Voices,"

"The Lord of Burleigh," "Break, Break," in the first volume; "Enoch Arden," in the volume which contains the "Grandmother" and, besides those two poems, "Sea Dreams," and a lovely little fragment entitled, "Requiescat;" and in "Maud," "The Brook;" and in "The Princess," the song "Home they brought her warrior dead," and the following:—

"As through the land at eve we went,
And plucked the ripened ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O, we fell out, I know not why,
And kissed again with tears.

For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kissed again with tears."

SOME OF THE WOODEN WONDERS OF AMERICA.



TRESTLE-BRIDGE ON THE PACIFIC RAILWAY.

AMERICA has been called a wooden country, and with reason. From the Atlantic westward, and from the great lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, vast forests confronted the early settlers. Not a patch of

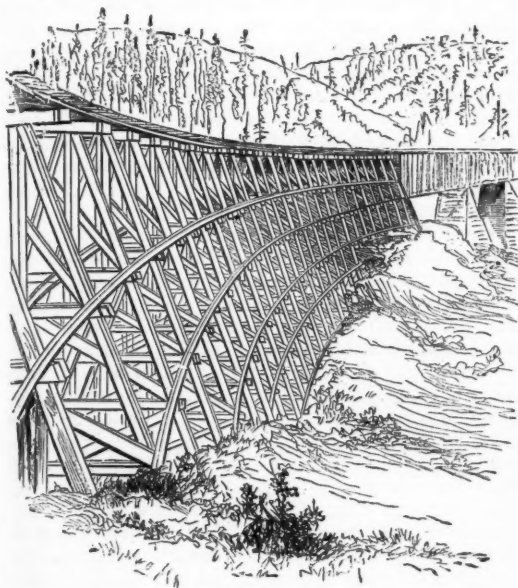
corn could be planted till trees were felled. Civilisation literally hewed its way through barricades of timber. Timber lumbered the country as, in a few remaining localities, it does still. "Corduroy roads"

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were but a systematic arrangement of "lumber" stems felled, and offering otherwise impassable obstructions. In the utilisation of this superabundant timber wooden towns arose, wooden bridges, roadways, piers, wharfs, ramparts, to an extent unknown in other countries. Imposing edifices, with architectural embellishments, are seen of wood. But of public works where wood is extensively employed, none are more astonishing than the bridges. To us, a "wooden bridge" is suggestive of a few rustic planks across a stream in some peaceful meadow. In America the ponderous train, freighted with hundreds of human beings, dashes across one wooden bridge after another, and miles and miles of tressel-



SECTION OF BRIDGE.

work. Bridges in all stages of development may be seen in America, from the simple planks placed parallel on heavy timbers stretched from bank to bank, to the elegant suspension bridge spanning rivers so broad, that in recalling them the Yankee may be pardoned for having compared our Thames at Richmond to a few yards of white ribbon among the gooseberry-bushes. Wooden bridges have taken a high rank in modern engineering; and for boldness in their design, combined with mechanical perfection and simplicity, America enjoys the precedence. As viaducts, too, over the swampy regions of lowlands, or across gulches and gorges in the mountains, whence you gaze down perpendicular depths, startling and terrifying to untrained nerves, the amazed traveller is borne along on airy-looking woodwork. Many perilous journeys on creaking timbers can the writer recall. Through the swamps and cane-brakes of the south, during the Secession War, and across broad estuaries—where many parts were out of repair for want of hands—slowly and cautiously the train crept along, and glad were we to get on firm ground again. Crossing the Alleghannies, at elevations of some 2,000 feet, are chasms of terrific grandeur, bridged over by only wood. Again, along the Pacific railways, the tressel bridges of later construction are among the most remarkable features of the route. The traveller who crosses

them for the first time, does so with a strange sensation of peril, as he looks down into the depths below, and seems to feel the great mass swaying beneath him. The accompanying sketch of one of them conveys a fair idea of several of them.

Spanning Dale Creek, a mountain stream near Sherman, is a tressel bridge, 650 feet from one rocky bluff to another. High, light, airy, and graceful as you look up 126 feet from the silvery stream, and like ornamental trellis-work, its strength is nevertheless enormous. Not a single portion of the framework used in these bridges is less than twelve inches, generally fifteen inches in diameter; and the posts and piles "corded" or banded together with iron plates, are simply countless, except to engineers, who sum them up by mathematical rule. Another tressel bridge is at a point which, from its gloomy and dangerous character, has been named in the forcible, if not poetical, vernacular of the west, Devil's Gate. This—about ten miles from the Great Salt Lake—is where the Weber River rushes with tremendous violence down a chasm of the Rocky Mountains. On the first opening of the line, the train passed over on a tressel bridge seventy-eight feet above the boiling current, and where the volume of water was great and rapid. A Government inspector thus reported of the spot:—"Should a train go down into this fearful gulf, all who escaped being crushed would inevitably be drowned." He described the bridge as a "double tressel, one resting on the other," the supporting timbers standing at an angle of about forty degrees, gradually narrowing from the base to the top. "The upper timbers, among other means adopted to prevent their giving way, are secured by large ropes tied around them, and fastened to projecting rocks above." The inspector of the line pronounced the structure "extremely dangerous," and an iron bridge indispensable. As he was detained twenty-four hours to have the tressels better secured by means of additional braces, and recorded the death of a mechanic, who had fallen in and been swept down the raging current, "rescue being impossible," it is to be hoped that the tressel bridge at Devil's Gate exists no longer.

Good tressel-work is expected to last from fifteen to twenty years, and for viaducts is reckoned much cheaper than embankments.

American engineers affirm that when renewals are necessary, the timber can be replaced at small cost, or filled in with earth embankments, by transporting materials along the line at less expense than in the first construction of the railway. A glance at a few figures enables us to appreciate the labour and expense of transporting timber in the construction of those western railways. A great deal of the wood used is pine from Puget's Sound, reckoned nearly equal to oak. Besides this there is pine on the mountains, and what is called "hardwood," or scrub-oak, valuable, but unattainable, except from great distances. For instance, at Denver (a place on the western boundary of the vast treeless plains which extend for nearly 600 miles beyond the Mississippi) pine-wood was procured at 20 dols. a cord, and scrub-oak at double that price. A cord contains 128 cubic feet of timber, and costs, where wood is plentiful, only from three to five dollars. From Denver to the nearest point on the Pacific Railroad, 200 miles north, timber was transported in wagons at an expense of about 75 dols. a cord, and purchased by the railroad agents at the enormous cost of 105 dols.

each cord; the scrub-oak for twice that price. Imagine giving from twenty to fifty pounds sterling for one small cartload of timber! "What could make it such a price?" you ask. Distance. Picture to yourselves the labour of conveying it from the slopes of the mountains, and the long trains of wagons, each drawn by from twelve to eighteen mules or oxen, toiling over rocky heights and pathless plains at the rate of ten miles a day. In one single year, and starting from one single town (Aitchinson, in Kansas), 4,480 of such wagons were in use to convey material for the railway. 7,310 mules and 29,720 oxen were required to draw these wagons, and 5,610 men to control and conduct them. 27,000 tons of freight were thus conveyed for the construction of the line. Not all *wood*, it is true, were the loads, but similar calculations might be made from Denver and other lumber markets. Omaha, Leavenworth, and other large towns in Kansas and Nebraska, tell us of similar thousands of wagons, men, and cattle engaged in moving to its destination half a million tons of freight that one year. The reader can, in some degree, judge of the consumption of timber when he learns that many parts of the eastern slope of the Nevada Mountains, which eight or ten years ago were clothed with dense forests of pine and juniper, are now cleared half way up, and in some places to their very summit. The toil of conveying timber down those rocky slopes, and over foaming cataracts, can be well imagined. Along the smiling valleys and grassy plains the labour is scarcely less. Rivers, whose channels shift with the season, are to be forded; mud and sand to the hubs of the wheels to be waded through. Many a tale of death could be told of foot-sore teamsters who, unacquainted with the fords of streams, such as the Platte River, have led their teams into its apparently firm bed, to sink for ever in treacherous sands, or, if to rescue their wagons at all, only by unloading, and attaching treble teams to haul them out.

The greatness of the engineering works of America corresponds with the vastness of her scenery. Her rivers, wide as they are, must be bridged over, and the plans adopted by the architects in wood, as well as in stone, iron, or all combined, vary with the nature of the localities. Suspension bridges of enormous proportions are taking the place of the old-fashioned drawbridges; and where immense width, but less shipping, demand bridges of a different character, experiments and combinations are countless. Wooden bridges with iron towers, iron bridges with wooden towers, piers of iron, wood, or masonry, and various kinds of truss bridges, known by the names of inventors, now meet you in all parts of America. Several suspension bridges with wooden towers, and spans of from 200 to 400 feet, exist. At Trenton, New Jersey, a curiously beautiful bridge of five spans is suspended by iron bar chains from curved, solid-built beams. Then there is the "Lattice-truss bridge," the "Pratt-truss system," "Long's plan," "Barr's plan," and Howe's; with blocks of "hard wood," and belts of iron through them, and braces and counter braces, and nuts, and screws, and bolts, and a variety of other things, comprehensible to the engineer only, and with which we will not fatigue the reader.

To enumerate a few out of the scores of wonderful bridges in the United States, and beginning with wooden ones, over the Alleghany River at Pittsburg was a tressel bridge 1,172 feet long, and now replaced by one of iron, said to be "a model of elegance and

strength." At Quincey, Illinois, there is a tressel bridge across the Mississippi, which, including the embankments, is nearly a mile in length.

The Portage Bridge, spanning the Genesee River, on the Buffalo and Hornellsville branch of the Erie Railway, and which was destroyed by fire last year, is said to have been the largest wooden viaduct in the world, and was also famous for the grandeur of its location. It spanned a gorge with perpendicular walls, through which the Genesee River leaps in three successive falls to the level of the valley below, and stood upon thirteen stone piers, set in the river-bed, sufficiently above high-water mark to be secure against freshets. Upon these piers it rose 234 feet. It was 800 feet long, cost 175,000 dollars, and was so ingeniously constructed that any single timber in it could be removed and replaced at pleasure without deranging others. Close to where it stood are the Horseshoe Falls, the Middle Falls, the Devil's Oven, and other objects of interest to the tourist. A train had just passed over it when the flames were discovered, and though every attempt was made to save it, the fire appeared in so many places that all efforts were in vain.

Over the Schuylkill at Philadelphia is another remarkable wooden bridge, with a span of 340 feet. Over the Ohio at Wheeling, a wooden bridge has a span of above 1,000 feet, and farther down, uniting the States of Ohio and Kentucky, at Cincinnati, is a suspension bridge whose total length is 2,250 feet, and 100 feet above high-water mark, with a centre span of 1,057 feet. The Hudson, the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Missouri, and other broad rivers in America, now boast of bridges, each claiming honour for some especial feature. At Omaha, the starting-point of the Pacific Railway, the trains from the east were at first shifted bodily on to huge flat-bottomed boats to cross the Missouri River; and the first railroad bridge built there was swept away by the overpowering "freshets" on the breaking up of the ice. "Never mind," cried the enterprising and undaunted engineers; "we will build it stronger next time." And so they have. It is of iron now. Only after such costly experiments as these can the force of American rivers be discovered. A flood is a mild term in which to describe the effects of a sudden thaw and the rush of waters, bearing with them earth, trees, blocks of ice, and *débris*, as if the world itself were passing away in one tumultuous torrent. For the rivers to rise ten, twenty, forty feet within a few hours is not unusual, and bridges must be built accordingly. Against "ice-floods" some of the bridges are guarded with "ploughshare-shaped ice-breakers," or their piers sheathed with plate-iron, as in the Susquehanna Bridge, whose piers are of solid granite masonry—eight of them on solid rock, and six, in consequence of the unstable bed of the river, on pile foundations. Even a massive railroad bridge, with piers of iron or of solid granite, may be reckoned among the *wooden wonders* of America, since so many of them rest on wooden piles. And this, to the uninitiated, seems most marvellous. We need not, however, be engineers to comprehend something of the process—interesting to all who can claim an acquaintance "across the ferry," and who cannot do this? Take, for example, a bridge now in progress over the East River, New York, and which is to eclipse all previously constructed bridges in astonishing engineering. Its centre span will be "the longest in the world"—viz., 1,268 feet, and

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a tall vessel can sail beneath it. The piers of this magnificent structure rest on caissons made of pine from the forests of Georgia. Each box, or "caisson," is 168 feet long, 102 feet wide, $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep, and 8 feet thick, and at the bottom 22 feet thick! Inside it has a

the river—and all the while masonry is being piled on the top of the box to force it down, while the occupants dig and burrow beneath. When sufficiently sunk and settled on the firm bed of the river, the buried workmen are released, and their late



BURNING OF PORTAGE BRIDGE.

number of partitions, each four feet thick, and outside it is covered all over with thick iron plates. Besides this, the edges of the box are "shoed" with cast iron, and the whole interior is lined with boiler plate, every joint being air-tight and "bolted" strongly to the box.

We will suppose one of these dainty boxes ready to be sunk, what next? First, it is to be inhabited for a time by workmen, who pass in and out by an aperture at the top, and to the various chambers formed by the partitions, through which are openings. And thus it begins to sink, workmen and all. Powerful machinery is employed—derricks and so forth—to shift this monstrous box to its destination, and to lower it into the water; and day after day, and night after night, the air is pumped into the imprisoned workmen, while they pump out the sand and gravel and water, and excavate deeper and deeper—perhaps one hundred feet into the bed of

habitation is filled in with concrete, which soon becomes as hard as the rock itself. This is the sort of wooden box on which rest a pier and a tower of a suspension bridge, and railway trains into the bargain.

Over the Hudson at Albany is another wonderful bridge, with twenty-one stone piers resting on spruce piles of from twelve to fourteen inches in diameter. But these wooden supports are not left, like solitary posts, to bear the wear and tear of rapid waters. Two and a half to three feet apart, each group of piles is encased in a strong box, or "crib," bound by ties of thick iron plates, and then filled with concrete. These cribs, or boxes, are from twenty-four to twenty-eight feet below low-water level, and the masonry rests upon them. The method of sinking piers for the iron suspension bridges is so interesting, that I think the reader will not weary with yet another description. The construction of the bridge at Omaha, to replace the wooden one washed away by the

spring floods, shows us what sort of bed is that of the Missouri River, as well as that of the Mississippi, the Platte, and several others, where rocks lie deep in the ever-shifting sandy bottoms. Imagine an iron "ring" ten feet long, an inch and three-quarters thick, and nine and a half feet in diameter. Scores of such "rings" were cast in Chicago, and conveyed across Illinois and Iowa to Omaha. The railroad suspension bridge there is half a mile long, and has eleven spans of 250 feet each, and of course twelve piers, each composed of from six to twelve of these iron rings. Twenty-four hours are spent in sinking one ring, and the operation is similar to that of sinking the wooden boxes for the East River bridge. By an air-tight cover, and atmospheric pressure from above, it is driven down until the top is on a level with the surface of the ground. Then, by means of machinery, the sand is driven out—men working inside of it as well—until it has firmly settled, when another ring is lowered upon it and "bolted on," and so on, until the lowest ring has reached the bed-rock of the river. Though suspension bridges are of very remote origin, those of iron date only from the latter part of the last century. In ancient Peru were suspension bridges on the Andes made of ropes and bark of trees. The Chinese boast of one 330 feet high, built A.D. 63. "Wire" ropes in use at the present day are of six or seven twists, each from two to three inches in diameter. 14,560 such wires are employed in the cables of the Niagara Suspension Bridge, where the trains run 245 feet above the boiling torrent. This wonderful bridge is also chiefly of wood, and what is still more remarkable, the whole of the timber-work has lately been replaced without at any one time detaining trains or traffic (there is a double track), or causing any stoppage whatever. It was opened in 1854, and began to be re-timbered in April 1873. All the girders under the railway track have been rebuilt, and 300,000 feet of seasoned timber have been used in its renovation. Repairs completed under such circumstances, and with the rush of trains and carriages overhead, are surpassed only by the American feat of moving houses from one street to another, or raising them bodily without disturbing either the furniture or the inhabitants. Even this, by the way, cannot be done without the agency of wood.

C. C. H.

ANTIQUARIAN GOSSIP ON THE MONTHS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BRITISH POPULAR CUSTOMS, PAST AND PRESENT."

January.

IN whatever respect we regard the months of the year, they are equally full of interest: whether historically we review the course of political and social events as therein illustrated; or whether in our pursuit after scientific research we watch the rapid and continuous changes in nature, such, for example, as are seen by the botanist as he studies the growth and habits of plants, or by the entomologist as with careful observation he notes the characteristic peculiarities of the insect world; or again as are seen by the meteorologist and astronomer, as the former observes the fluctuations of the atmosphere, and the latter the motions of the heavenly bodies: in every case alike, each month is anticipated with feelings of

interest, as adding its quota to the store of general knowledge. This, too, is equally true in an antiquarian point of view, and so it is proposed to give a series of papers on the history of the months, noticing some of the many quaint and superstitious practices connected with them.

Our first month of the year, as every reader knows, derives its name from the Latin *Januarius*, so called by Numa, in honour of Janus, the two-faced god, who, according to mythology, looked both before and behind, and so was chosen to typify the New Year, which, standing on the confines of the past and the future, may be said to gaze alike on both. It was not until the last century that a general rule was adopted for beginning the year, it having varied at different times and places, commencing, for example, on Christmas Day, *i.e.*, the 25th of December; on the day of the Circumcision, *i.e.*, the 1st of January; on Lady Day, *i.e.*, the 25th of March, and on Easter Day. Independently, however, of the time of its commencement, the nativity of the New Year has always been a season of great merry-making, which is perhaps to be attributed, more than any other, to social reasons, it being, so to speak, a sort of second birthday, which most persons are glad to welcome with feelings of mingled gratitude and joy. Although still commemorated throughout the country, yet of late years, many of the customs connected with its observance have either fallen entirely into disuse, or are rapidly doing so, a thing much to be regretted. Indeed, in London, apart from the domestic gatherings which are held in most families, the return of the New Year is now only hailed by the ringing of church bells here and there, and the transmission of congratulatory cards, which have superseded in a great measure the visits and presents of olden times. In looking back on the history of the past, it is surprising to find how even a few years have completely altered and changed the aspect of our social manners. Formerly, too, at this season the rejoicings were not simply confined to private individuals, but, for several centuries, it was customary to present the sovereign with a New Year's gift, which oftentimes was of the most costly and expensive nature. Thus in the reign of Queen Elizabeth this practice was carried to such an extravagant height, that it is said her wardrobe and jewellery were in a great measure supported by these annual contributions. Although, therefore, this custom served, as far as the sovereigns were concerned, to testify the loyalty of their subjects, yet it was undoubtedly a great tax on the pockets of the middle and poorer classes; for, as Mr. Nichols in his "Progresses of Queen Elizabeth" shows, these presents were made not only by the great officers of State, peers and peeresses, bishops, knights, and their ladies, gentlemen and gentlewomen, physicians and apothecaries, but even by others of lower grade, down to her Majesty's dustman. At the period of the Commonwealth this custom, with but few exceptions, seems to have ceased almost entirely, only henceforth being carried on amongst relatives and friends; and of late years even too, the latter practice has much declined in this country. At Paris, however, it is not so, for it appears that, owing to the vigour with which presents are still interchanged on this day, it is called *Le jour d'Etrennes*. Indeed it has been estimated that the amount expended in that city upon *bouillons* and sweetmeats alone far exceeds £20,000.

In England, one of the favourite forms of New Year's gifts was gloves, and that, too, at a time when they were far more expensive and scarce than now-a-days. An amusing story is related of Sir Thomas More. As Lord Chancellor he decided a case in favour of a Mrs. Croaker, who, as a token of respectful gratitude, sent him on the following New Year's Day a pair of gloves containing forty pieces of gold money. Sir Thomas More, however, accepted the gloves but not the gold, replying in a note that "it would be against good manners to forsake a gentlewoman's New Year's Gift, and I accept the gloves, their *lining* you will be pleased otherwise to bestow."

Pins, also, were a gift very popular among ladies, and must have been truly acceptable after the wooden skewers which had been in use until the close of the fifteenth century.

From the following passage in Bishop Hall's "*Satires*" (1598) it would seem that the usual gift of tenantry in the country to their landlords was a capon:—

"Yet must he haunt his greedy landlord's hall,
With often presents at each festival;
With crammed capons ev'ry New Year's morn,
Or with greene cheeses when his sheepe are shorne."

From a curious ms. in the British Museum, dated 1560, we learn that the boys of Eton School were accustomed on this day to play for little New Year's gifts before and after supper, and also to make verses, which they presented to the provost, masters, and to one another. New Year's gifts of verses, however, were not by any means peculiar to boys; and Mr. Ellis, in a note on Brand's "*Popular Antiquities*" (1849, vol. i. p. 16), has introduced one in Latin from the pen of the ingenious writer Buchanan, to the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots. Formerly, too, the Poet-Laureate composed a special ode for New Year's Day, which we find was recited and sung to music in presence of the royal family assembled at St. James's.

Among the few customs that still linger on in some parts of the country may be mentioned the following one, chiefly noteworthy on account of its highly superstitious character. Great attention is paid to what is termed the "*First Foot*," that is, the person who is first to enter the house on the morning of the New Year. Thus, in Lancashire, should a female or a light-haired male be the earliest visitor, this event is regarded in no other light than quite a misfortune, as betokening ill luck for the whole twelve months. In order, therefore, to prevent so inauspicious a commencement of the year, various precautions are taken. Accordingly, very early indeed in the morning, many male persons with black or dark hair go from house to house, in order to take in the New Year, in return for which valuable service they often receive a good breakfast and a small gratuity in money. It not unfrequently, however, happens that the inmates of a house, afraid of being imposed upon by some practical joke or ill-natured person, absolutely refuse to open their door until quite satisfied that the visitor outside answers the conditions required for his entry to carry with it good luck and happiness.

Again, many families, to avoid all risk whatever, having invited some dark-haired relative or friend to spend the last evening of the Old Year with them,

request him, a few minutes before the hour of midnight, to leave the house and wait outside the door until the bright and joyous peels of the church bells, bursting merrily forth, have heralded in the New-born Year, when he is not only admitted, but welcomed with quite an ovation. "A friend of mine," says a correspondent of "*Long Ago*" (1873, vol. i. p. 9), "asked me, prior to New Year's Day, if I, being dark, would bring him in the New Year. At that time I was not acquainted with the custom, having lately removed from the county of Derby to that of Lancaster; but, on having the mode of carrying out the duties attaching to the occasion explained to me, promised to comply with my friend's wish. I was then asked to go in to supper on New Year's Eve. I went accordingly, and the evening was occupied in the usual way, by amusements of various kinds, until shortly before the hour of midnight arrived, when my friend's wife became a little nervous and excited, and requested me to go out of the house. I then went out, the door being securely barred behind me. I stayed until I heard the clocks strike 'the witching hour,' and until the bells altered their tones from the dolorous notes with which they 'ring out the Old Year' to the merry clangour with which they 'ring in the New.' I then went back, knocked at the door, and was asked from the inside, 'Who's there?' and, on announcing that it was myself, and no other, I was admitted and took in the New Year." *

At one time this custom seems to have been very prevalent in Scotland, but latterly to have become very unpopular, owing to the excessive drunkenness which it unhappily occasioned. Indeed, it seems that seldom a year passed by without some scene of gross misconduct on the part of the merry-makers, until at last stringent measures were taken to put a stop altogether to these midnight festivities. Many quaint and superstitious practices, however, are still kept up, and far greater merriment exists than in England.

The first Monday after New Year's Day is called by the Scotch Handsel Monday, and this much resembles our Boxing-Day. Children anxiously look forward to it in the hope of receiving a present of some sort, and the dustmen, postmen, etc., go from house to house asking for their annual gifts.

Formerly, in some parts of England, the eve of Twelfth Day was observed as a great rustic festival, at which farmers were in the habit of wassailing, or making libations to, their orchards, as this ceremony was thought to insure a good and plentiful crop in the ensuing autumn. Thus, for example, in the southern villages of Devonshire, as soon as supper was over, the farmer, attended by his family and servants, went into the orchard with a large milk-pail of cider, and there encircling one of the best bearing apple-trees, drank three separate times the following toast:—

"Here's to thee, old apple-tree,
Whence thou mayst bud,
And whence thou mayst blow!
And whence thou mayst bear apples enow!
Hats full! caps full!
Bushel, bushel, sacks full!
And my pockets full, too! Huzza!"

* This custom varies in different parts. It is considered in some places extremely lucky for a light-haired person to bring in the New Year.

After this they returned home, but on their arrival were sure to find every door shut and barred against them, which those within absolutely refused to open until some one had divined what was on the spit. However bad the weather might be they were still kept outside until the lucky guess had been hit upon. In some places this custom seems to have been prevalent also on Christmas Eve, and thus under this date we find Herriek alluding to it:—

"Wassalle the trees, that they may beare
You many a plum and many a peare;
For more or less fruit they will bring,
As you do give them wassailing."

Twelfth Day, from its being looked upon as the last day of the Christmas holidays, is generally a time of very great merry-making, although the festive rites connected with this anniversary were, no doubt, originally intended to commemorate the visit of the Eastern magi to pay their homage to the infant Saviour. In the calendar of the Romish Church it is called the "Festival of Kings," and the custom of electing kings by beans is thought by some to have originated in their memory. In France it was formerly customary for one of the courtiers to be chosen king, and to be waited upon by the monarch and his nobles in a grand entertainment. The Marquis de Dangeau tells us that Louis XIV. in 1698, refused to keep his Twelfth Night at Versailles, on account of the great number of ladies (four hundred and seven!) whom he considered he was *obliged* to ask.

In our own country a large cake was made for this occasion, in which was placed a bean, and whoever, upon its being divided, got the piece containing it, was elected king for the day, and called "King of the Bean." Now-a-days this practice has almost, if not entirely, become obsolete, and Twelfth Night festivities consist for the most part of family and friendly gatherings, in which music and dancing form the prominent features.

At St. James's Palace a curious custom is still observed on this day. After the reading of the sentence at the offertory, "Let your light so shine before men," etc., while the organ plays, two members of her Majesty's household, in the royal livery, descend from the royal pew and advance to the altar rails, preceded by the usher, where they present to one of the officiating clergymen a red bag, which is received in an offertory basin, and then placed on the communion-table. This bag or purse is understood to contain the Queen's offering of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, in commemoration of the gifts of the magi to the infant Saviour.*

The day after Twelfth Day was, by our forefathers, called St. Distaff's Day, or Rock Day, because women resumed the rock or distaff. Plough Monday was the first Monday after Twelfth Day, and seems to have been so called because it was the first day after Christmas that husbandmen resumed the plough. In some parts of the country it was customary for them, dressed up in fantastic garbs, to draw their ploughs in procession, and to stop at the houses of the rich, where they performed a kind of pageant, in return for which they demanded a present of money. If, however, as not unfrequently happened, their request was not complied with, they at once punished the offender by ploughing up the

road in front of his house, and setting up the most hideous and deafening noise. Another curious custom formerly prevailed on this day. In the northern counties, if a ploughman came to the kitchen-hatch and could cry "Cock in the pot" before the maid could cry "Cock on the dunghill," he was entitled to a cock for Shrove Tuesday.

The 13th of January is New Year's Day according to the old style. In the year 1751 an Act was passed in England to change the style from the Julian to the Gregorian, and it was provided that the legal year 1752 should commence, not on the 25th of March, but on the 1st of January; and also that after the 3rd of September in that same year, the next day should be regarded as the 14th, eleven days by this means being dropped out. For some time after this event it appears that one of the favourite street cries was, "Who stole the eleven days?" this alteration in the calendar being very unpopular amongst the unlearned, who thought that in consequence of it they were deprived of eleven days of their life.

At All Souls' College, Oxford, the 14th of this month was in times gone by celebrated as a great gala day in memory of a large mallard, or drake, said to have been discovered in a drain when the foundations of the college were being dug. Although this observance is no longer kept up, yet at one of the college gaudies a very old song is still sung, called "The Swapping Swapping Mallard." Pointer, in his "Oxoniensis Academia," was guilty of a grave offence by insinuating that this wonderful mallard was no other than a goose; but he soon met with support from Mr. Bilson, the chaplain of the said college, who issued a folio sheet, entitled "Proposals for printing by subscription the History of the Mallardians," with the figure of a cat prefixed, said to have been found starved in the library of the college.

On St. Agnes's Eve (January 20th) many kinds of divination were formerly practised by young women anxious to gain some knowledge of their future partners in wedlock. In the old comedy of "Cupid's Whirligig" we find the alderman's daughter, Nan, telling her friend how "she could find in her heart to pray nine times to the moone and fast three St. Agnes's Eves, so that she might be sure to have him to her husband." In "Poor Robin's Almanack" for 1734 the following allusion is made to this custom:—

"Saint Agnes Day comes by and by,
When pretty maids do fast and try
Their sweethearts in their dreams to see,
Or know who shall their husbands be.
But soon when married all is ore,
And they desire to dream no more,
Or, if they must have these extreams,
Wish all their sufferings were but dreams."

Ben Jonson, in his masque of "The Satyr," refers to this superstition, but ascribes it to the wrong night (St. Anne's, July 26th). Speaking of the fairy Queen Mab, his satyr says:—

"She can start our Franklins' daughters
In their sleep with shouts and laughter;
And on sweet St. Anna's night,
Feed them with a promised sight,
Some of husbands, some of lovers,
Which an empty dream discovers."

* See the "Echo," January 7th, 1869.

St. Vincent's Day (January 22nd) is not marked by the observance of any special custom, but only by an old admonition to observe whether the sun shine, as its doing so was believed to betoken a fine, dry year. A correspondent of "Notes and Queries" says that a gentleman residing in Guernsey, whilst looking over some old family papers of the sixteenth century, by chance came across the following lines in old provincial French, from which it would appear that this day was anxiously looked forward to by the vintagers in consequence of the superstitious belief attached to it:—

"Prens garde au jour St. Vincent,
Car, sy ce jour tu vois et sent
Que le soleil soiet cler et biau,
Nous érons du vin plus que l'eau."

In Cornwall, the first red-letter day in the "Tinner's Calendar" is the eve of Paul's tide, or as it is more commonly called by them, "Paul's Pitcher-day." On this occasion a very curious and quaint custom is practised, the origin of which is involved in almost complete obscurity. On St. Paul's Eve the tinner takes a water-pitcher, and, after setting it up in some spot agreed upon, commence throwing stones at it until they have completely knocked it to pieces. They then go to an ale-house in the neighbourhood, where they spend the evening in merriment, drinking freely out of a new pitcher bought in place of the old one.

In the "Shepherd's Almanack" for 1676, among the observations given on the month of January, occur the following:—"Some say that, if on the 12th of January the sun shine, it foreshadows much wind; others predict by St. Paul's Day, saying, if the sun shine, it betokens a good year; if it rain or snow, indifferent; if misty, it predicts great dearth; if it thunder, great winds and death of people that year."

Gay, however, in his "Trivia," alluding to the superstitions connected with this day, says:—

"Let no such vulgar tales debase thy mind,
Nor Paul nor Swithin rule the clouds and wind."

At one time the 30th of January was observed as the anniversary of the execution of King Charles I. In the year 1859 the special form of prayer which had been used on this day was by Act of Parliament removed from the Prayer-book. The "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1735 (vol. v. p. 105), under this date, relates that certain "young noblemen and gentlemen met at a tavern in Suffolk Street, Charing Cross, under the denomination of the 'Calves'-head Club,' dressed up a calf's head in a napkin, and, after some huzzas, threw it into a bonfire, and dipt napkins in their red wine and waved them out at window. The mob had strong beer given them, and for a time hallooed as well as the best, but, taking disgust at some healths proposed, grew so outrageous that they broke all the windows and forced themselves into the house; but the guards being sent for, prevented further mischief."

Hearne, also, tells us how, at All Souls' College, Oxford, on January 30th, 1706-7, some young men dined together at twelve o'clock, and amused themselves with cutting off the heads of a number of woodcocks, "in contempt of the memory of the blessed martyr." They tried to obtain calves'-heads, but the cook refused to cook them. ("Reliquiæ

Hearnianæ," vol. i. p. 121.) On the 2nd of March, 1772, Mr. Montague moved that the 30th of January should no longer be kept as a day of fasting and humiliation. On a division, there appeared for his motion 97, against it 125; it was therefore lost by a majority of 27.

The last day of this month was for very many years observed at Newark as a great raffling day for oranges in the market-place. In the year 1870, however, this old custom was no longer observed, in consequence of the enforcement of the law by which public raffling is strictly prohibited.

ANECDOTE OF CHARLES DICKENS.

THE following anecdote has been sent to us by one who has seen the letters and knew the writers. He thinks it shows the ruling vanity of Dickens; we think it shows rather the kindly and genial side of his nature, in taking the trouble to reply to people whom he supposed to be in the very humblest grade of life. At all events, the incident is authentic, and too good to be lost.

Having lately read the life of Charles Dickens, I was reminded of a circumstance, trifling in itself, but which showed that a man who professed and was allowed to have a perfect knowledge of human nature might sometimes be befooled, especially when a dose of flattery had been judiciously administered.

It happened that in 1842, when the great novelist was the lion of the day at Montreal, there lived there a young man fond of collecting autographs. He had a desire to procure one from Dickens. This was no easy matter, as multitudes bored him for his writing, and he had to refuse with some sternness, or wholly to ignore the application. The means he took to get it was original, and proved successful. Little expecting a reply, he wrote as follows:—

"Mr. Dickens, sur,

"Me and my wife's got a boy, and wee've a-heer tell a great deal about the beautiful books you've a-writ, and the good you've a-tryed to do for us pore folks. Now we has a-thote that it mite so be that you mite let we giv youre name to our boy. Us is no scollerds, but we hope that, as wages is good and learning is plenty, that he will some day read what you've a-rit. An' so, Sir, we askes yu're pardin, and wishes yu prosperity an' good luk. If so be as you rite, direc Andrew H—, Monreal Post Offis. So no more at present from you're humbel servints to commend,

"there X X

"marks.

ANDREW H—.

MARY H—."

This missive elicited a reply, at which the recipient was so elated, that he showed it to his mother, who strongly disapproved of the proceeding, and the consequence was that he handed the letter to me, of which the following is a copy:—

"Roscoe's Hotel, Montreal,

"Seventeenth May, 1842.

"Dear Sir,

"I am much indebted to you for your gratifying and welcome letter, and am proud to know that you have conferred my name on your child in recollection of my writings.

"That he may become all you wish him to be, and that he may in his time derive some entertain-

ment and instruction from my poor endeavours to beguile the leisure time of children of a larger growth, is my sincere and earnest wish. If I could ever learn that I had happily been the means of awakening within him any new love of his fellow-creatures, and desire to help and assist them with his sympathy, I should feel much pleasure from the knowledge.

"Believe me, faithfully yours,
"CHARLES DICKENS."

The writer of the letter is, or lately was, the owner of a large plantation, in the Bengal Presidency, of 33,000 acres. This property he has intersected with upwards of sixty miles of road, planted with shade-trees, and has built several villages. "Andrew H—" has had the gratification of seeing his name mentioned in flattering terms by three successive lieutenant-governors. He gets credit for "the energy and enterprise displayed by him, and also for the popularity he has acquired among the natives." We have suppressed his name, as he is probably ashamed now of the unworthy trick played on Dickens in his early life.

Varieties.

SHIPS ON PUBLIC SERVICE AMENABLE ONLY TO THE LAWS OF THEIR OWN NATION.—"When private individuals of one nation spread themselves through another, as business or caprice may direct, mingling indiscriminately with the inhabitants of that other, or when merchant vessels enter for the purpose of trade, it would be obviously inconvenient and dangerous to society, and would subject the laws to continual infraction and the Government to degradation, if such individuals as merchants did not owe temporary and local allegiance and were not amenable to the jurisdiction of the country. . . . But in all respects different is the situation of a public armed ship. She constitutes a part of the military force of her nation, acts under the immediate and direct command of her Sovereign, is employed by him on national objects. He has many and powerful motives for preventing these objects from being defeated by the interference of a foreign State. Such interference cannot take place without affecting his power and his dignity. The implied licence, therefore, under which such vessel enters a friendly port may reasonably be construed, and it seems to the Court ought to be construed, as containing an exemption from the jurisdiction of the Sovereign within whose territory she claims the rites of hospitality. Upon these principles, by the unanimous consent of nations, a foreigner is amenable to the laws of the place; but certainly in practice nations had not yet asserted their jurisdiction over the public armed ships of a foreign Sovereign entering a port open for their reception." This judgment was delivered by Chief Justice Marshall, of the United States Supreme Court, in 1812, and its reasonings and its conclusions have been adopted by every jurist deserving of the name who has written since that date.

ART-STUDY NOT THE PRIME WISDOM.—Mr. Gladstone, in his speech at the School of Art, Greenwich, happily defined the place of physical science and aesthetic culture in relation to the higher duties of life. "Whatever I may think of the pursuits of industry and science, and of the triumphs and glories of art, I do not mention any one of these things as the great specific for alleviating the sorrows of human life, and meeting the evils which deface the world. I believe firmly in science and art for their own purposes. I believe in their reality, their efficacy, and their value; but I believe they are efficacious and valuable for the purposes for which they were ordained, and not for purposes for which they were not ordained. If I am asked what is the remedy for the deeper sorrows of the human heart—what a man should chiefly look to in his progress through life with which to sustain him under trials and confront his affliction—I must point to something very different, to something which in a well-known hymn is called 'the old, old story.' It is this 'old, old story,' told in a good old book, with the teaching to be found there, which is the greatest and best gift ever given to

mankind, a gift carrying with it and imposing upon all alike the most solemn trusts and responsibility, arousing the fullest recollections of the past and the brightest hopes of the future. If we were here to-night to consider the main purpose for which we live, that is the topic on which we should have to dilate. But I am free to own that even those who have been most zealous for religion, and perhaps in consequence of their zeal for religion, have sometimes pushed that zeal to such a point that they have lapsed into not only the unnecessary, but I think the disturbing and injurious view of human nature in the dispensation under which we live—that, provided men are well instructed in the principles of the holy faith they profess, nothing else is worth attention in this life. I believe that is not perhaps a fatal, but certainly a serious and dangerous error, because it disassociates religion from the general course of thought and of life, from the necessities of man's condition, and from the opportunities offered to him by the faculties he possesses for self-improvement and development. The human nature in which we are cast was not endowed and equipped with all its marvellous faculties for nothing. The glory of the Creator in the external and inanimate world is not to be seen in some one object only here and there, but in every object; and the glory of the Creator in man, who is the crown of His creation, although it may be more clearly shown in certain faculties and capabilities of his nature than in others, yet is to be seen in them all; and it is the due, equable, proportionate, and effective development of that nature in all its capabilities which constitutes the true and full idea of the duty of man in the world in which he is sent to live. I venture upon this observation for myself lest, in speaking of the immense value which is to be attached to the subjects with which we are dealing to-night, it should be supposed I was setting them up as having some exclusive claim of allegiance upon you."

WOMAN'S SPHERE.—Professor Blackie, in a recent lecture, said:—"A woman is naturally as different from a man as a flower from a tree; she has more beauty and more fragrance, but less strength. She will be fitted for the rough and thorny work of the masculine professions when she has got a rough beard, a brazen front, and hard skin, but not sooner."

INDIA AND INDIAN MISSIONS.—The Bishop of Oxford, in a recent speech, thus referred to Indian missions:—He firmly believed that one great reason why the whole work of Christian missions had sometimes languished was simply a want of knowledge. The kind of assertion which some foolish young fellow who had spent a little time there would sometimes make—that, so far as he could see, missions had done nothing for India—was too often taken for granted. "Dear me!" exclaimed his lordship, "what did he see of Christian missions or of anything else? He saw a tiger, perhaps, or a cantonment in which he was interested, but what opportunity had he of seeing the operations of missionaries and judging of their results? What did he know of spiritual work at home? What did he know of spiritual work in the next parish? He would be unable to give an account of Christian work in the immediate neighbourhood, to say nothing of a diocese. Such a man might be able to say something about his sport or about the last ball he attended, but how could he tell them of what was being done in men's hearts by the preaching of the Gospel? Therefore why should they take what he said for granted when he brought home a smart sentence about the value of missions in a vast empire like India? Why should they assume that he knew all about it?" Englishmen sadly needed a better acquaintance with the whole state of things in that vast empire; and when they did know more about it they would find that there were great capacities for conversion, and that eager inquiries were being made by large classes of natives as to the meaning, power, and evidence of the Christian religion. We occupied a position in relation to India never occupied by any other nation; and if we were only true to ourselves—if in our dealings with the people we were honest, earnest, and gentle—not arrogant and imperious—we might, by God's mercy, succeed in doing as great a work there as had ever been done since the Gospel was first preached. He saw in the visit of the Prince of Wales to India the possibility—it depended upon ourselves whether we used it or not—of a larger acquaintance with this part of the British empire.

PRICE OF LAND IN THE CITY OF LONDON.—A plot of land at the corner of Threadneedle Street and Bishopsgate Street, London, an area of about 3,600 feet, has been recently let at a ground rent of £2,600 per annum, to receive a pile of buildings suitable for bankers, public companies, and merchants. This rent is at the rate of more than £31,000 per annum per acre. Capitalised at 25 years' purchase, we get £775,000 per acre as the value of land.—*Builder*.

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